

## The Effects of Registered Intermediaries on Youths' Perceived Credibility

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### Abstract

Undergoing cross-examination can be stressful; therefore, many countries offer testimonial supports to help vulnerable witnesses provide their best evidence (Eastwood & Patton, 2003; Righarts et al., 2013). A Registered Intermediary (RI) is one testimonial support occasionally offered in Canada. RIs facilitate the communication between an individual and members of the criminal justice system (Birenbaum & Collier, 2017). To date, the impact of RI interjections on an individual's perceived credibility has not been widely researched, particularly with accused youths. Across two experiments, I examined how RI interjections during the cross-examination of a complainant and accused youth impacted their perceived credibility. In Experiment 1, I examined whether improving question clarity through RI interjections influenced the youths' perceived credibility. Participants ( $N = 357$ ) read a four-page simulated court transcript in which youths' either testified with an RI or without. If they testified with an RI, six questions were clarified. Participants then rated the youths' credibility. No differences were found in the perceived credibility of either the complainant or the accused in the study conditions (e.g., the complainant and accused both testified with an RI). However, there were some differences found in the exploratory conditions (e.g., the complainant testified with an RI and the accused did not). In Experiment 2, the youths' responses were also clarified through RI injections to examine if this impacted credibility. Participants ( $N = 277$ ) read the same transcript as in Experiment 1 and rated the youths' credibility. No differences were found in the perceived credibility of either the complainant or the accused in the study conditions (same as Experiment 1). However, there were some differences found in the exploratory conditions (same as Experiment 1). In general, across both experiments, it seemed the accused was perceived as less credible when they testified with

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an RI. The findings from this research could provide valuable information on the best practices for cross-examining accused youths.

*Keywords:* cross-examination, registered intermediary, perceived credibility, accused youth

### **The Effects of Registered Intermediaries on Youths' Perceived Credibility**

The experience of testifying in court can be stressful, especially for children (Eastwood & Patton, 2002; Righarts et al., 2013). Therefore, some countries offer testimonial supports and courtroom accommodations to help children provide the most accurate account of the evidence. Registered Intermediaries (RI), one type of a testimonial support, were first offered in 1993 in South Africa and are currently offered in a handful of other countries (Jonker & Swanzen, 2007). RIs facilitate the communication between an individual and members of the criminal justice system (Birenbaum & Collier, 2017). Importantly, while it is common for victims and witnesses to be provided supports, the same is not true for accused persons, even those under 18 (YCJA, 2002).

In some cases, particularly sexual abuse cases, there is a lack of corroborating or physical evidence (e.g., DNA). This sometimes makes the complainant's and/or accused's testimony the only evidence, and therefore, imperative to the outcome of the case (Regan & Baker, 1998). As such, complainant perceived credibility has been researched extensively. For example, studies have examined how the use of testimonial supports impacts a complainant's perceived credibility, but it is mainly focused on children (Chong & Connolly, 2015). Little research has explored the perceived credibility of older children, the impact of testimonial supports on accused persons, or the impact of RIs on a complainant or accused. Therefore, this study examined how RI interjections during a cross-examination impacted the perceived credibility of a complainant and an accused youth.

#### **Testimonial Supports and Courtroom Accommodations**

When a vulnerable victim or witness must testify in court, some countries offer testimonial supports and courtroom accommodations to help them provide their best evidence. However, not all countries agree on who should be afforded these supports or what supports should be available.

##### ***The United Kingdom, New Zealand, & Canada***

The United Kingdom (UK), New Zealand (NZ), and Canada (CND) are some countries at the forefront of testimonial supports and courtroom accommodations. The UK allows those under 18, any person with a mental disorder, a significant impairment of intelligence or social functioning, a physical disability or disorder, those fearful of testifying, complainants in sexual offences, and victims of serious crimes or offences involving a gun or knife access to supports (Special Measures, 2020). NZ allows complainants, child witnesses, and, notably, some defendants access to supports (Evidence Act, 2006). CND allows victims or witnesses under 18, any

complainant with a mental or physical disability, and, if deemed necessary, any other complainants access to supports (Bill C-2, 2005). All three countries offer CCTV (allows one to testify from outside the courtroom via a video-link), privacy screens (a physical barrier that shields the individual from the defendant), and the option to submit a previously recorded video as direct testimony (Chong & Connolly, 2015; Evidence Act, 2006; Special Measures, 2020). Additionally, NZ and CND allow support persons (someone of the individual's choosing who can offer emotional support while they testify) and do not allow defendants to personally cross-examine complainants (Bill C-2, 2005; Chong & Connolly, 2015; Evidence Act, 2006). In sum, these three countries offer a wide range of supports to a wide range of individuals; however, NZ appears to be the only country that regularly offers any supports to accused persons.

### ***South Africa & The United States of America***

South Africa (SA) and the United States of America (USA) offer a more limited selection of supports to a more limited selection of individuals. SA allows children under 18, those involved in cases of sexual abuse and witnesses who are unable to hear or speak access to supports (CPA 51, 1977; Jonker & Swanzen, 2007). The USA allows witnesses and victims under 18 who are involved in child abuse or exploitation cases access to supports, but only if the child has been found unable to testify in front of the defendant (Child victims' and child witnesses' rights, 2009). SA offers RI services (discussed in more detail below) and the use of certain forms of non-verbal communication (Jonker & Swanzen, 2007). The USA offers CCTV, videotaped depositions, an adult attendant (who offers emotional support to the witness), the use of demonstrative devices, multidisciplinary child abuse teams (offers support from various professions), and guardian ad litem (advocates for the best interest of the child) (Child victims' and child witnesses' rights, 2009). While both countries offer some supports to some individuals, both have limitations. Importantly, neither country specifically mention any supports for accused persons.

### ***Registered Intermediaries***

RI services vary widely across countries. The UK is at the forefront of RI services; however, they are currently only available to vulnerable witnesses (Special Measures, 2020). As previously mentioned, SA offers intermediary services (CPA 51, 1977). When using an intermediary in SA, all questions are directed to the witness through the intermediary. The intermediary can simplify questions without altering the meaning, and then the child responds via the intermediary using CCTV (Jonker & Swanzen, 2007). The following people can serve as

intermediaries in SA: social workers, medical practitioners, family counsellors, teachers, childcare workers, and psychologists (Jonker & Swanzen, 2007). In NZ, communication assistance is available to help individuals understand the court proceedings or to utilize while they give their evidence (Evidence Act, 2006). The Evidence Act in NZ has a broad definition of what a communication assistant is, but their role is similar to an RI (Buckingham et al., 2019). CND began using communication intermediaries around 2012, but currently they are limited to those with communication disabilities (Birenbaum & Collier, 2017). Finally, there is no mention of intermediary services being offered in the USA (18 U.S.C. § 3509).

In summary, the testimonial supports and courtroom accommodations offered varies widely depending on the country. The UK, NZ, and CND offer many supports to a wide variety of individuals. Additionally, these countries all offer an intermediary service. SA and the USA are much more limited in their use of supports. However, SA does offer some intermediary services. Significantly, NZ is the only country that regularly offers any supports to accused persons.

### **Rights of the Accused**

In the Canadian Charter of Rights of Freedoms (1982) all accused persons have the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty and to a fair hearing (Canadian Charter, 1982). Additionally, they have the right to an interpreter if they do not speak English or French, or if a witness does not speak their native language (Canadian Charter, 1982). Apart from these rights, it seems accused persons lack many of the protections afforded to vulnerable witnesses. Vulnerability is not limited to victims and witnesses. It appears that the focus of the rights of the accused is ensuring they understand the court proceedings and have effective communication with their counsel. While these are important protections, supports for accused persons while they testify is seemingly neglected. All persons should be provided with the opportunity to give their best evidence to the court, regardless of their legal status.

### ***Rights of the Accused Youth***

In many countries, there are protections for youths involved in the criminal justice system. In Canada, there have been three youth justice statutes. The Juvenile Delinquents Act (1908-1984), the Young Offenders Act (YOA) (1984-2003), and currently the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) (YCJA Summary, 2017). The Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA), affords special provisions to accused youths, aged 12-18, due to their increased vulnerability and diminished responsibility (YCJA, 2002). The main concerns the YCJA addresses are the overuse of court

proceedings and incarcerations for less serious youth cases, sentencing issues, lack of reintegration after release, and emphasizing the victims' interests (YCJA Summary, 2017). While these concerns are important, the YCJA does not seem to ensure any testimonial supports are available for young accused persons (YCJA, 2002). Additionally, while Bill C-2 affords vulnerable witnesses access to testimonial supports, it does not specifically mention accused youths (Bill C-2, 2005). Therefore, if neither of these provisions afford accused youths any testimonial supports, this vulnerable group is left disadvantaged.

### ***Should Accused Youths' Be Afforded Testimonial Supports?***

**A Look at Complainants During Cross-Examinations.** Being cross-examined is difficult, especially for young complainants (Eastwood & Patton, 2003; Righarts et al., 2013). The questions asked during cross-examination are often difficult for children to understand, in addition to being leading, suggestive, or even confrontational (Eastwood & Patton, 2002). Children often describe the experience as "confusing...difficult [and] intimidating" (Eastwood & Patton 2003, p. 59). Even when children are given prior preparation for cross-examination, the process can negatively impact their accuracy (Righarts et al., 2013). Due to the difficulties children experience with cross-examination, many will alter their responses under cross-examination (Zajac et al., 2003). Zajac et al. (2003) examined courtroom transcripts and found 76% of 5- to 13-year-old complainants of child sexual abuse altered a previous statement under cross-examination. These inconsistencies will likely undermine the complainant's perceived credibility. In a courtroom setting, ground truth is unknown by members of the jury, therefore jurors may rely on the complainant's consistency to judge their overall credibility (Myers et al., 1999). This implies that difficulties young complainants experience during cross-examination may impact how they are perceived by the jury. If this is true for young complainants, the same could be true for young accused persons.

**A Look at Youths' Comprehension in the Criminal Justice System.** Many legally involved youths have a poor understanding of their Miranda rights, often their first communication with the criminal justice system (Sharf et al., 2017; Viljoen, 2007). Sharf et al. used archival data of legally involved youths (average age of 15), to highlight how poor understanding about their Miranda rights by youths may lead to invalid waivers. Youths were given a mock crime scenario, a Miranda warning, and were then questioned. Many of these youths waived their Miranda rights and subsequently confessed after only a few minutes (Sharf et al., 2017). In another study, Viljoen

et al. (2007) used different standards of comprehension to compare defendants' understanding of their Miranda rights. The higher standard required youths to understand and appreciate their Miranda rights, while the lower standard only required youths to understand them (Viljoen et al., 2007). To measure the participants understanding of their Miranda rights, instruments were used that required participants to paraphrase the warning, recognize other sentences that had a similar meaning, and define words in the warning (Viljoen et al., 2007). To measure the participants appreciation of their Miranda rights, instruments were used that required participants to answer questions after being shown drawings and vignettes of different legal scenarios (Viljoen et al., 2007). Using the lower standard, about 8% of defendants aged 16-17, more than 33% aged 14-15, and more than 50% aged 11-13 were impaired in their understanding (Viljoen et al., 2007). Using the higher standard, more than 75% of defendants aged 11-13 and more than 60% aged 14-15 were impaired (Viljoen et al., 2007). Interestingly, Rogers et al. (2014) found, regardless of the youths' maturity level, over 80% exhibited 10 or more incorrect beliefs regarding their Miranda rights (Rogers et al., 2014). In sum, these results highlight how much youths struggle to understand their Miranda rights and supports the notion of communication assistance for accused youths.

In summary, while accused persons are afforded some basic rights under Canadian law, there is currently no specific legislation in place to protect them during an examination. Much of the current literature on complainants and cross-examination has found that the process is difficult for young people (Eastwood & Patton, 2002; Righarts et al., 2013). Accused youths have also been found to display a poor understanding of their Miranda rights, meaning they are likely experiencing the same difficulties as complainants. If both sides of a criminal case can experience difficulties while they testify, one's legal status should have no bearing on one's access to testimonial supports.

### **Perceived Credibility**

When a witness testifies, many factors can influence how a juror might perceive them. Of particular importance is how credible the witness is perceived to be. The more credible they are, the more likely a juror will believe their testimony. Factors such as the age, presence of supports, or the modality by which they testify can all influence perceived credibility.

According to the two-factor theory proposed by Goodman, Bottoms, Herscovici, and Shaver, perceived credibility consists of two components: perceived honesty and cognitive competence (Ross et al., 2003). When looking at the credibility of child witnesses, the nature of

the crime being recalled impacts how these two components are weighted (Bottoms, 1993). Perceived honesty may be more relevant in child sexual abuse cases, whereas cognitive competence may be more relevant in unfamiliar or complex cases that require details to be recalled (Nunez et al., 2011). In general, younger witnesses are perceived as more honest and less cognitively competent compared to older witnesses (Bala et al., 2005; Nightingale, 1993). Duggan et al. (as cited in Bottoms, 1993) found 5- and 9- year-olds were perceived as more credible than 13-year-olds in a case of molestation. In contrast, younger children were perceived as less credible when they were the witness of a car accident (Bottoms, 1993). Overall, younger children may have an advantage when honesty is more relevant and older children may have an advantage when cognitive competence is more relevant.

### ***Witness Credibility and Testimonial Supports***

Multiple factors can influence the overall perceived credibility of a witness, including the presence of testimonial supports. The impact of CCTV on complainant perceived credibility has been widely researched (Chong & Connolly, 2015; Landström et al., 2007). Overall, testifying via CCTV negatively impacts perceptions of child complainants (Goodman et al., 1998; Landström et al., 2007). The impact of RIs on perceived credibility has been examined far less. Collins et al. (2017) examined if RI interjections during questioning would affect the perceptions of children in a two-part study. In the first part, 4- and 13-year-old children were cross-examined about a cartoon they had watched, either with or without an intermediary interjecting during the questioning. In the second part, participants watched one of the four cross-examinations, and rated their perceptions of the children (Collins et al., 2017). The children were rated as more truthful, credible, believable, cooperative, responsive, confident, comfortable, consistent, and accurate, as well as less suggestible, stressed, and vulnerable in the RI condition (Collins et al., 2017). In another study, Ridley et al. (2015) examined the impact of RI interjections during a fictitious police interview on perceptions of a child. In the interview, a police officer questioned a 6-year-old child about burns (Ridley et al., 2015). In the intermediary present interview, an RI interjected five times throughout the questioning (Ridley et al., 2015). RI interjections led to more positive ratings of the interview, but it did not affect how participants perceived the child (Ridley et al., 2015). This small body of literature shows that RIs may have a positive impact on perceptions of complainants.



### ***Differences in Perceptions of Complainant and Accused***

It is important to note that to date, there appears to be no research comparing perceptions of a complainant and an accused, of any age, with any testimonial supports. One study was found that compared perceptions of a child complainant and a child accused. Redlich et al. (2008) had participants read a transcript of the children's questioning with a police officer. The child's age, either 7-, 11-, or 14-years, and their admission status, either they admitted involvement in the crime but recanted, or they did not, was manipulated across conditions. Researchers found differences in the perceptions of the complainant based on whether they admitted involvement, but there were no differences for the accused. Based on this limited research, it seems certain factors could influence perceptions of the complainant, but not the accused.

### ***Complainant Credibility and Accused Guilt***

An interesting finding in credibility studies is that guilt ratings of the accused and credibility ratings of the complainant are often related. We tend to see that with increased credibility ratings of the complainant there is also increased guilt ratings for the accused. Regan and Baker (1998) examined how child witness demeanor (crying or calm) during cross-examination influenced the outcome of the trial and witness credibility. They found participants in the crying condition perceived the children as more honest, accurate and credible and were more likely to think the accused would be found guilty. Additionally, Connolly and Gordon (2011) found when the complainant was perceived as more credible, participants also rated the accused as more guilty. This could mean that if a testimonial support was used during cross-examination that increased complainant credibility (e.g., an RI), the use of that testimonial support could also increase the accused's guilt rating.

### ***What are RI Interjection Studies Really Examining?***

When RIs interject, it is often to re-phrase inappropriate questions, such as leading, complex, or multipart questions. Therefore, when looking at the literature on RI interjections, what is often being examined are the effects of clarifying questions through RI interjections. Karla and Heath (1997) examined if leading vs. non-leading questions and child-defendant relationship influenced mock-juror perceptions of a child witness. Child witnesses were perceived as more credible and honest when non-leading questions were asked (Karla & Heath, 1997). Castelli and Goodman (2005) found similar results. Across two studies, 4- and 7-year-old complainants were asked three varying levels of leading questions, ranging from highly to slightly leading (Castelli

& Goodman, 2005). Both 4- and 7-year-old complainants were perceived as less credible when asked highly leading questions compared to less leading questions (Castelli & Goodman, 2005). However, in their second study, this finding only applied to the 4-year-olds (Castelli & Goodman, 2005). Overall, it seems child complainants are perceived as less credible when they are asked leading questions, meaning if an RI interjects to clarify these types of questions, it should positively impact perceptions of their credibility.

Additionally, when looking at the effects of RI interjections, the responses of the complainant may also be altered due to the questions being clearer. There is some interesting research on the effects of speech style on credibility. Erikson et al. (1978) examined how differences in a complainant's response influenced perceptions of credibility. The complainant's speech was either powerful or powerless. In the powerless condition, the speech contained: intensifiers ("definitely" "very" "surely"), hedges ("kind of" "a little" "sort of"), hesitation forms ("uh" "um"), etc. (Erikson et al., 1978). The powerful speech condition contained fewer of these linguistic features. Those using powerless speech were perceived as less credible compared to the powerful speakers (Erikson et al., 1978). Additionally, Ruva & Bryant (2006) examined how witness age (6, 10, or 22 years), speech style (powerful or powerless) and questioning style (open- or closed-ended) influenced credibility. Powerless speech contained hesitations ("um"), hedges ("I think"), and false starts ("I...I think") whereas powerful speech did not (Ruva & Bryant, 2006). Researchers found the child witnesses were perceived as less credible when they spoke in a powerless speech style (Ruva & Bryant, 2006). Overall, this research suggests testifying in a powerless speech style can negatively impact perceptions of credibility.

Interestingly, Boccaccini et al. (2005) examined how improvements to an accused person's responses influenced their perceived credibility across two studies. In the first study, participants acted as mock accused persons and described a fictitious crime. The participants were randomly assigned to either receive pre-testimony training aimed to improve their delivery skills or not receive training. One of the factors addressed in the training was removing hesitations (um's and uh's) from their testimonies. All participants testified once, then either received training or did not, and then testified again. In the second study, Boccaccini et al. (2005) had eight real defendants testify, once before and again after they received the same testimony training as in study one. Trained evaluators then viewed and rated the testimonies. Participants in both studies who were trained, were able to reduce the number of hesitations in their speech from their first testimony to

their second. This resulted in trained accused persons having significant improvements to their general credibility and being perceived as less likely to be guilty compared to the accused who were not trained. This study offers insight into how improvements to an accused person's speech influences their perceived credibility and how an RI interjection that decreases hesitations may improve the credibility of an accused.

In summary, how a jury member perceives those testifying can be imperative to the outcome of the proceedings (Regan & Baker, 1998), particularly in cases of sexual abuse. The use of testimonial supports, such as an RI, can influence a witness's overall credibility. Research on RIs is sparse, but it seems to positively impact perceptions of the child (Collins et al., 2017). When looking at the literature on testimonial supports, how these types of supports impact youths or accused persons is lacking. Additionally, to add to the literature on RIs, research on question type and witness response suggests being asked more clear questions and responding more clearly positively impacts perceived credibility (Castelli & Goodman, 2005; Erikson et al., 1978). More research is needed to better understand the impact of RIs on credibility and a better representation of age and legal status is vital in this area of literature.

### **The Current Research**

The current research seeks to add to the literature base by examining the perceived credibility of youths' who testify with an RI. The present study will include youths who are either the complainants or the accused to explore how the use of RIs impact perceptions of accused youths. Additionally, to gain a deeper understanding of how RI interjections influence credibility perceptions, this study will look at the effects of improving both question (Experiment 1) and response (Experiment 2) clarity through RI interjections.

### **Experiment 1**

In Experiment 1, I examined whether improving question clarity through RI interjections influenced the perceived credibility of a complainant and an accused youth. Participants read a four-page simulated court transcript of a complainant and accused youth's questioning who were involved in an alleged Level 1 sexual assault case. Participants read one of four transcripts: 1) the complainant and accused testified with an RI, 2) the complainant and accused testified without an RI, 3) the complainant testified with an RI and the accused testified without an RI, 4) the complainant testified without an RI and the accused testified with an RI. When testifying with an

RI, the RI interjected to clarify six questions. After reading the transcripts, participants answered a questionnaire measuring the complainant's and accused's perceived credibility.

### **Hypotheses**

A priori hypotheses were developed to compare conditions in which: 1) the complainant and accused testified with an RI and 2) the complainant and accused testified without an RI, as follows:

1. The complainant will be perceived as more cognitively competent, honest, and confident when both the complainant and accused testify with an RI compared to when they both testify without an RI.
2. There will be no differences in ratings of the accused when both the complainant and accused testify with an RI compared to when they both testify without an RI.
3. The accused will be perceived as more guilty when both the complainant and accused testify with an RI compared to when they testify without an RI.

Two additional exploratory conditions were included in which: 3) the complainant testified with an RI and the accused testified without an RI and 4) the complainant testified without an RI and the accused testified with an RI to see how these scenarios influenced perceived credibility. There were no a priori hypotheses for these conditions.

### **Method**

#### ***Design***

Experiment 1 was a single factor between-subjects design with four conditions: 1) both the complainant and accused testified with an RI, 2) both the complainant and accused testified without an RI, 3) the complainant testified with an RI and the accused testified without an RI, 4) the complainant testified without an RI and the accused testified with an RI. When the youth testified without an RI, a support person (SP) was present to serve as a control for another person being near the youth.

#### ***Participants***

An a priori power analysis was conducted using G\*power to determine the sample size needed for this study. With alpha set at .05 and power set to .80, a sample size of 200 participants is required to detect an effect size of .25.

***Procedure***

Participants first provided their informed consent and then read the transcript of the youths' questioning. Next, participants answered the questionnaire, which included demographic questions. Participants completed the study by reading a written debriefing form.

***Materials***

**Transcripts.** The transcript of the complainant's questioning began with a brief introduction that explained the participants' task and information about the case. Next, the definition of a Level 1 Sexual Assault was given, as well as the definition of the type of assistance the complainant received (RI or SP). A legend was provided to define the symbols and abbreviations used throughout the transcript (e.g., A is referring to an attorney speaking). Next, the direct and cross-examination of the complainant was given. The transcript was then repeated for the accused including the same components outlined for the complainant. Four transcript conditions were used for this study: 1) the complainant and accused testified with an RI, 2) the complainant and accused testified without an RI, 3) the complainant testified with an RI and the accused testified without an RI, 4) the complainant testified without an RI and the accused testified with an RI.

When the youths' testified with an RI, six confusing questions (questions that are leading, contain confusing language, or are multi-part questions) were asked by an attorney. Then an RI interjected and asked that the questions be re-phrased to improve clarity. Then the attorney re-phrased the questions (either by removing the leading portion of the question, simplifying the language used or only asking one question at a time) (shown below).

Example from the complainant testifying with an RI:

A: What time did you arrive at the party? Was it late? Was it dark outside or light?

RI: Could you please only ask one question at a time.

A: Okay, what time did you arrive at the party?

Y: Um I think around 10

When the youths' testified without an RI, the same six confusing questions were asked by the attorney, but there was no RI interjection and no re-phrasing of any questions (shown below). Both the complainant and accused youths' responses were held constant regardless of if they testified with or without an RI (shown below).

Example from the complainant testifying without an RI:

A: Okay, what time did you arrive at the party? Was it late? Was it dark outside or light?

Y: Um I think around 10

**Questionnaire.** Participants answered a 15-question questionnaire based on the complainant's questioning. First, 11 7-point Likert scale questions were asked. These questions were then averaged to create the composite measures: honesty (#1, #2, #9 reversed), cognitive competence (#6 and #8), consistency (#3 and #4), confidence (#7 and #11 reversed) and overall credibility (#5 and #10) of the youth. Additionally, one open ended question asked participants to provide the most important reason for their overall credibility rating (#12). Then, two attention (#13 and #14) and one manipulation check question (#15) was asked. These 15 questions were then repeated based on the accused's questioning and the questions were averaged to create the same composite measures as for the complainant. Participants also rated the likelihood of the accused's guilt on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all likely*) to 7 (*very likely*) (#16) and were asked to indicate if they think the accused was (1) guilty or (2) not guilty on a dichotomous verdict question (#17). The order of the questionnaires was counterbalanced such that participants answered the questionnaire either for the complainant or the accused first. Finally, six demographic questions were asked (age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, first language, and length of time speaking English). The questionnaire was a total of 38 questions.

## Results

### *Participants*

A total of 357 adults aged 18 and older who lived in either Canada or the United States participated in this study. However, 112 participants were removed because they did not give permission for their data to be used in analyses and 16 were removed because they got fewer than half of the manipulation and attention check questions correct. Therefore, 229 participants were included in the data analyses. Of these, 123 were community members, 112 recruited from MTurk and 11 from social media. These participants ranged in age from 22 to 67 years, with a mean age of 36.85 years ( $SD = 10.62$ ). More participants were male (57.1%) compared to female (41.1%). The majority of participants were Caucasian (78.9%) and spoke English as a first language (97.6%).

The remaining 106 participants were undergraduate university students recruited from KPU's SONA system. These participants ranged in age from 18 to 47 years, with a mean age of

22.66 years ( $SD = 5.50$ ). Most participants were female (84%), Caucasian (30.2%) and spoke English as a first language (74.5%).

### *Measures*

**Complainant.** The credibility questionnaire for the complainant contained 11 items. I proposed that these items would be averaged to create the composite measures: honesty, cognitive competence, and overall credibility. These composite measures are supported by theories on perceived credibility and previous research (Castelli & Goodman, 2005; Ross et al., 2003). Items that correlated at .70 and above were averaged to create the composite measures: honesty (#1, #2 reversed, #9; Cronbach's alpha = .86), cognitive competence (#6, #8, #3; Cronbach's alpha = .79), and overall credibility (#5 and #10: Cronbach's alpha = .87). Perceived confidence (#7) and anxiousness (#11 reversed) did not correlate (Cronbach's alpha = .39); therefore, these items were not combined. Perceived consistency (#4) was also measured.

Cronbach's alpha was also run on the composite measures to check for correlations. Honesty, cognitive competence, overall credibility, confidence, and consistency all correlated (Cronbach's alpha = .91), and therefore these were combined into one overall credibility measure to reduce the number of analyses to be conducted. I will now refer to this DV in the results and I will restate the hypothesis with this DV when appropriate. Perceived anxiousness did not correlate with the other items (Cronbach's alpha = -.24 to .02), and therefore I conducted a separate analysis on this item (all means for Experiment 1 are in Table 1).

To test Hypothesis 1, which stated the complainant would be perceived as more credible when both the complainant and accused testified with an RI compared to when they both testified without an RI, I conducted a one-way between-groups analysis of variance on the complainant's overall credibility. There was an effect of improving question clarity through an RI on the complainant's perceived overall credibility ( $F(3, 222) = 3.900, p = .010, \eta_p^2 = .05, BF_{10} = 0.361$ ) between the 4 transcript conditions. Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated the complainant was perceived as more credible when the complainant testified without an RI and the accused did than when the complainant testified with an RI and the accused did not. The condition in which both the complainant and the accused testified with an RI, as well as the condition in which both the complainant and the accused testified without an RI, was not significantly different from the other conditions.

There was no effect of improving question clarity through an RI on the complainant's perceived anxiousness ( $F(3, 223) = .264, p = .851, \eta_p^2 = .00, BF_{10} = 0.030$ ) between the 4 transcript conditions. The BF analysis for this result indicated strong support for the null hypothesis.

**Accused.** The credibility questionnaire for the accused contained 12 items. I proposed that these items would be averaged to create the composite measures: honesty, cognitive competence, and overall credibility. Items that correlated at .70 and above were averaged to create the composite measures: honesty (#1, #2 reversed, #9; Cronbach's alpha = .84), cognitive competence (#6, #8, #3; Cronbach's alpha = .75), and overall credibility (#5 and #10: Cronbach's alpha = .90). Perceived confidence (#7) and anxiousness (#11 reversed) did not correlate (Cronbach's alpha = .52), therefore these items were not combined. Perceived consistency (#4) and guilt (#17) were also measured.

Cronbach's alpha was run on the composite measures to check for correlations. Honesty, cognitive competence, overall credibility, confidence, and consistency all correlated (Cronbach's alpha = .91), therefore they were combined into one overall credibility measure. I will now refer to this DV in the results and I will restate the hypothesis with this DV when appropriate. Perceived anxiousness did not correlate with the other items (Cronbach's alpha = -.35 to -.21), and therefore I conducted a separate analysis on this item.

To test Hypothesis 2, which stated there would be no differences in ratings of the accused when both the complainant and accused testified with an RI compared to when they testified without an RI, I conducted a one-way ANOVA on the accused's credibility. There was an effect of improving question clarity through an RI on the accused's perceived overall credibility ( $F(3, 219) = 2.799, p = .041, \eta_p^2 = .04, BF_{10} = 0.716$ ) between the 4 transcript conditions. Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated the accused was perceived as more credible when the complainant testified with an RI and the accused did not than when both the complainant and the accused testified without an RI. The condition in which both the complainant and the accused testified with an RI, as well as the condition in which the complainant testified without an RI and the accused did, was not significantly different from the other conditions.

To test Hypothesis 3, which stated the accused will be perceived as more guilty when both the complainant and accused testified with an RI compared to when they testified without an RI, I conducted a one-way ANOVA on the accused's perceived guilt. There was no effect of improving question clarity through an RI on the accused's guilt ratings ( $F(3, 221) = 1.987, p = .117, \eta_p^2 =$



.03,  $BF_{10} = 0.258$ ) between the 4 transcript conditions. The BF analysis for this result indicated moderate support for the null hypothesis.

There was also no effect of improving question clarity through an RI on the accused's perceived anxiousness ( $F(3, 223) = .944, p = .420, \eta_p^2 = .01, BF_{10} = 0.070$ ) between the 4 transcript conditions. The BF analysis for this result indicated strong support for the null hypothesis.

### **Discussion**

In Experiment 1, I examined if improving question clarity through RI interjections influenced perceptions of the complainant's and accused's credibility. Contrary to predictions, there were no differences found in the perceived credibility of either the complainant or the accused when they both testified with an RI compared to when they both testified without an RI. Additionally, contrary to predictions, there were no differences found in the accused's guilt.

These findings were surprising. Previous research has found that complainants are perceived as more truthful, credible, believable, cooperative, responsive, confident, comfortable, consistent, and accurate, as well as less suggestible, stressed, and vulnerable when RIs interject during their questioning (Collins et al., 2017). Previous research has also found that child witnesses are perceived as more credible and honest when they were asked non-leading (i.e., clearer) questions. Therefore, we expected that when the RI interjected to have the confusing questions rephrased to improve clarity it would positively impact perceptions of the complainant's credibility (Karla & Heath, 1997). In terms of the accused, this study appears to be the first to explore how RI interjections impact perceptions of accused persons, therefore more research is needed to fully understand these findings.

One explanation for the surprising results seen in Experiment 1 could be the use of written transcripts in this study. Collins et al. (2017) had participants watch a video-recorded cross-examination, meaning a participant's perception of the testimony could be influenced by how it is presented to them. For example, Landström et al. (2007) found mock jurors perceived a child's testimony more positively live compared to on video. However, another potential explanation is that I may not be seeing any differences in credibility in this study because the materials are only clarifying the questions asked. It is possible that what really has an impact on perceptions of credibility is when the youths' responses are also clarified through RI interjections.

## Experiment 2

In Experiment 2, I examined whether improving the response clarity of the complainant and accused through RI interjections influenced perceptions of their credibility. Participants read the same transcripts as in Experiment 1, however the youth's responses to the six confusing questions were also clarified if they testified with an RI. Participants read one of four transcripts: 1) the complainant and accused testified with an RI, 2) the complainant and accused testified without an RI, 3) the complainant testified with an RI and the accused testified without an RI, 4) the complainant testified without an RI and the accused testified with an RI. Participants then answered the same questionnaire as in Experiment 1, measuring the youths' perceived credibility.

### Hypotheses

As in Experiment 1, I developed a priori hypotheses comparing the conditions in which: 1) the complainant and accused testified with an RI and 2) the complainant and accused testified without an RI, as follows:

1. The complainant will be perceived as more cognitively competent, honest, and confident when both the complainant and accused testify with an RI compared to when they both testify without an RI.
2. The accused will be perceived as more cognitively competent, honest, and confident when both the complainant and accused testify with an RI compared to when they both testify without an RI.
3. The accused will be perceived as less guilty when both the complainant and accused testify with an RI compared to when they both testify without an RI.

Two additional exploratory conditions were included in which: 3) the complainant testified with an RI and the accused testified without an RI, and 4) the complainant testified without an RI and the accused testified with an RI to see how these scenarios influence perceived credibility. There were no a priori hypotheses for these conditions.

### Method

#### *Participants*

An a priori power analysis was conducted using G\*power to determine the sample size needed for this study. With alpha set at .05 and power set to .80, a sample size of 200 participants is required to detect an effect size of .25.

### ***Design***

Experiment 2 was a single factor between-subjects design with four conditions: 1) the complainant and accused testified with an RI, 2) the complainant and accused testified without an RI, 3) the complainant testified with an RI and the accused testified without an RI, 4) the complainant testified without an RI and the accused testified with an RI. Recall that a support person is present in the condition without an RI to control for another person being near the youth.

### ***Procedure***

Experiment 2 followed the same procedure outlined in Experiment 1, except for the manipulation which was done through changes in the transcripts.

### ***Materials***

**Transcripts.** When the youth testified with an RI, after each of the six confusing questions were asked, an RI interjected, and the questions were re-phrased. The youth's response was also clarified by removing hesitations (um's and uh's) in their response. When the youths testified without an RI, the same six confusing questions were asked, but there were no RI interjections, no questions were re-phrased, and the youths' responses were not clarified.

**Questionnaire.** Participants completed the same questionnaire as in Experiment 1.

## **Results**

### ***Participants***

A total of 277 adults aged 18 and above who lived in either Canada or the United States participated in this study. However, 77 participants were removed because they did not give permission for their data to be used in analyses and 12 were removed because they got fewer than half of the manipulation and attention check questions correct. Therefore, 188 participants were included in the data analyses. Of these, 102 were community members, 97 were recruited from MTurk and 5 were recruited from social media. These participants ranged in age from 18 to 71 years, with a mean age of 39.32 ( $SD = 11.88$ ). More participants were male (54.9%) compared to female (44.1%). Most participants were Caucasian (78.4%) and spoke English as a first language (95.1%).

The remaining 86 participants were undergraduate university students recruited from KPU's SONA system. These participants ranged in age from 18 to 48, with a mean age of 23.46 ( $SD = 6.08$ ). Most participants were Caucasian (30.2%), spoke English as a first language (67.4%), and were female (84.9%).

### *Measures*

**Complainant.** As in Experiment 1, items that correlated at .70 and above were averaged to create the composite measures: honesty (#1, #2 reversed, #9; Cronbach's alpha = .87), cognitive competence (#6, #8, #3; Cronbach's alpha = .76), and overall credibility (#5 and #10: Cronbach's alpha = .88). Perceived confidence (#7) and anxiousness (#11 reversed) did not correlate (Cronbach's alpha = .55); therefore, these items were not combined. Perceived consistency (#4) was also measured.

Honesty, cognitive competence, overall credibility, confidence, and consistency all correlated (Cronbach's alpha = .89), therefore these were combined into one overall credibility measure to reduce the number of analyses to be conducted. I will now refer to this DV in the results and I will restate the hypothesis with this DV when appropriate. Perceived anxiousness did not correlate with the other items (Cronbach's alpha = -.37 to -.04), and therefore I conducted a separate analysis on this item (all means for Experiment 2 are in Table 2).

To test Hypothesis 1, which stated the complainant would be perceived as more credible when both the complainant and accused testified with an RI compared to when they both testified without an RI, I conducted a one-way ANOVA on the complainant's overall credibility. There was no effect of improving response clarity through an RI on the complainant's perceived overall credibility ( $F(3, 179) = 1.563, p = .200, \eta_p^2 = .03, BF_{10} = 0.183$ ) between the 4 transcript conditions. The BF analysis for this result indicated moderate support for the null hypothesis.

There was an effect of improving response clarity through an RI on the complainant's perceived anxiousness ( $F(3, 184) = 4.088, p = .008, \eta_p^2 = .06, BF_{10} = 0.262$ ) between the 4 transcript conditions. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated the complainant was perceived as less anxious when both the complainant and accused testified with an RI than when they both testified without an RI. The condition in which the complainant testified without an RI and the accused did, as well as the condition in which the complainant testified with an RI and the accused did not, was not significantly different from the other conditions.

**Accused.** As in Experiment 1, items that correlated at .70 and above were averaged to create the composite measures: honesty (#1, #2 reversed, #9; Cronbach's alpha = .89), cognitive competence (#6, #8, #3; Cronbach's alpha = .78), and overall credibility (#5 and #10: Cronbach's alpha = .92). Perceived confidence (#7) and anxiousness (#11 reversed) did not correlate

(Cronbach's alpha = .68); therefore, these items were not combined. Perceived consistency (#4) and guilt (#17) were also measured.

Honesty, cognitive competence, overall credibility, confidence, and consistency all correlated (Cronbach's alpha = .92), therefore they were combined into one overall credibility measure to reduce the number of analyses to be conducted. I will now refer to this DV in the results and I will restate the hypothesis with this DV when appropriate. Perceived anxiousness did not correlate with the other items (Cronbach's alpha = -.57 to -.28), and therefore I conducted a separate analysis on this item.

To test Hypothesis 2, which stated that the accused would be perceived as more credible when both the complainant and accused testified with an RI compared to when they testified without an RI, I conducted a one-way ANOVA on the accused's overall credibility. There was an effect of improving response clarity through an RI on the accused's perceived overall credibility ( $F(3, 177) = 4.839, p = .003, \eta_p^2 = .08, BF_{10} = 0.103$ ) between the 4 transcript conditions. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the accused was perceived as more credible when both the complainant and accused testified with an RI than when the complainant testified without an RI and the accused did. The accused was also perceived as more credible when the complainant testified with an RI and the accused did not than when the complainant testified without an RI and the accused did. The condition in which both the complainant and accused testified without an RI was not significantly different from the other conditions.

There was no effect of improving response clarity through an RI on the accused's guilt ratings ( $F(3, 184) = .426, p = .734, \eta_p^2 = .01, BF_{10} = 0.045$ ) between the 4 transcript conditions. Therefore, Hypothesis 3, which stated the accused would be perceived as less guilty when both the complainant and accused testified with an RI compared to when they testified without an RI, was not supported. The BF analysis for this result indicated strong support for the null hypothesis.

There was also no effect of improving response clarity through an RI on the accused's perceived anxiousness ( $F(3, 184) = 2.173, p = .093, \eta_p^2 = .03, BF_{10} = 0.379$ ) between the 4 transcript conditions. The BF analysis for this result indicated weak to moderate support for the null hypothesis.

## General Discussion

This study examined if RI interjections impacted perceptions of a complainant and accused youth's credibility. In Experiment 1, I examined whether improving question clarity through RI

interjections influenced perceptions of credibility. Participants read one of four transcripts: 1) the complainant and accused testified with an RI, 2) the complainant and accused testified without an RI, 3) the complainant testified with an RI and the accused did not, 4) the complainant testified without an RI and the accused did. If they testified with an RI, six confusing questions were re-phrased to improve clarity. In Experiment 2, I examined if also improving response clarity through RI interjections influenced perceptions of credibility. The same transcripts were used as in Experiment 1, but when the youths' testified with an RI, their responses were also clarified.

### **The Effects of Clarifying Questions Through RI Interjections**

Contrary to predictions, there were no differences found in the perceived credibility of either the complainant or the accused when they both testified with an RI compared to when they both testified without an RI. However, there were differences found in the exploratory conditions. The complainant was perceived as more credible when they testified without an RI and the accused did compared to when the complainant testified with an RI and the accused did not. The accused was perceived as more credible when the complainant testified with an RI and the accused did not compared to when they both testified without an RI.

Additionally, contrary to predictions, there were no differences found in the perceived guilt of the accused. Perceived anxiousness was measured for exploratory purposes and there were no differences found for either the complainant or the accused.

The findings for the complainant's perceived credibility and anxiety were surprising. Previous research has found that complainants were perceived as more credible and less stressed when an RI interjected during their questioning and when they were asked less leading (i.e., clearer) questions (Collins et al., 2017; Karla & Heath, 1997). Therefore, we expected that when the RI interjected to clarify the questions in this study, the complainants would have been perceived as more credible and less anxious. Additionally, the findings for the accused's credibility and guilt were also surprising. However, as this study appears to be the first research exploring how RI interjections impact perceptions of accused persons, more research is needed to fully understand these findings.

One explanation for the surprising findings from Experiment 1 could be the use of written transcripts. In Collins et al. (2017) participants watched the complainant testify via a video-recorded cross-examination, whereas participants in this study read a written transcript. This could mean that how a participant is presented with the testimony could influence perceptions. For

example, Landström et al. (2007) found mock jurors perceived a child's testimony more positively live compared to on video. The impact of testimony presentation on perceptions should be investigated further.

An additional explanation for the findings from Experiment 1 could be that simply clarifying the questions through RI interjects does not influence perceptions in the way we would expect. Previous research has not discerned and individually examined the two effects RI interjections can have on questioning, the clarifying of the questions asked, and the subsequent responses given. Rather these have just examined the impact of the presence of RI interjections. Therefore, it is possible that if the responses are also clarified, we could see findings more consistent with my predictions and previous research.

### **The Effects of Clarifying Responses Through RI Interjections**

Contrary to predictions, there were no differences found in the perceived credibility of either the complainant or the accused when they both testified with an RI compared to when they both testified without an RI. However, there were differences found in the exploratory conditions for the accused. The accused was perceived as more credible when: 1) both the complainant and accused testified with an RI compared to when the complainant testified without an RI and the accused did, 2) the complainant testified with an RI and accused did not compared to when the complainant testified without an RI and the accused did. Additionally, contrary to predictions there were no differences found in perceptions of the accused's guilt. Perceived anxiousness was measured for exploratory purposes and the complainant was perceived as less anxious when both the complainant and accused testified with an RI compared to when they both testified without an RI. There were no differences found in the accused's perceived anxiousness.

The finding regarding the complainant's credibility were surprising. Erikson et al. (1978) found when complainant's responses contained more linguistic intensifiers, such as more hesitation forms ("uh's" and "um's"), they were perceived as less credible. Therefore, I expected that when the complainant's responses contained fewer "uh's" and "um's" due to RI interjections, they would have been perceived as more credible. However, the research on how improvements to a complainant's response clarity impacts their perceived credibility is limited and the reduction of hesitation forms in Erikson et al. (1978) was not due to RI interjections. Therefore, more research is needed to fully understand the impact of response clarity on credibility.

The exploratory finding regarding the complainant's anxiousness was consistent with previous research that found complainants are perceived as more truthful, credible, believable, cooperative, responsive, confident, comfortable, consistent, and accurate, as well as less suggestible, stressed, and vulnerable when RIs interject during their questioning (Collins et al., 2017). However, in Collins et al. (2017), the complainant's responses were not clarified. Currently, there does not appear to be any research in which the complainant's response is clarified through RI interjections and anxiousness is measured. Future research should explore this further.

Interestingly, in the current study, improving response clarity through RI interjections led to complainants being perceived as less anxious, but it did not impact perceptions of their credibility. Meaning participants were more willing to alter their perceptions of the complainant's anxiety, but not credibility. This could be because judgements of credibility may be associated more with the outcome of the case, whereas judgements of anxiousness are less so. Therefore, finding the complainant less anxious does not automatically mean one sides with them when deciding the outcome of the case.

The finding regarding the accused's credibility was inconsistent with previous research that found when accused persons underwent pre-testimony training that clarified their responses (reduced um's and uh's) they were perceived as more credible (Boccaccini et al., 2005). The findings were also inconsistent with previous research that found when a defendant was accompanied by an RI during cross-examination they were perceived as less anxious and more believable (Smethurst & Collins, 2019). However, in Boccaccini et al. (2005) the reduction in um's and uh's were not due to RI interjections and in Smethurst and Collins (2019) the defendant's responses were not clarified through the RI interjections. While the literature base on accused persons and intermediaries is emerging, it is still limited. Specifically, there appears to be no current research on how RI interjections influence accused responses and in turn how this impacts credibility. As such, more research is needed in this area.

The finding regarding the accused's guilt was inconsistent with previous research that found improvements to an accused person's response clarity positively influenced perceptions of their guilt (Boccaccini et al., 2005). However, in Boccaccini et al. (2005) the accused's response clarity was not improved through RI interjections, instead it was through pre-testimony training. Boccaccini et al. (2005), and no other study for that matter, seems to have examined the impact of



response clarity through RI interjections on perceptions of an accused's anxiousness. Therefore, more research is needed in this area.

In summary, across both experiments it seems that the accused was perceived as less credible when they testified with an RI. This finding differs from previous research which found accused persons were perceived as more credible when their responses were clarified and complainants were perceived as more credible when an RI interjected during their questioning (Collins et al., 2017; Erikson et al., 1978). However, as noted throughout, there appears to be no research that examines how improvements to response clarity through RI interjections impacts perceptions of an accused's credibility. It seems that the accused's legal status could be a factor in these findings. Participants in this study may have reacted negatively to seeing someone accused of a sexual offence receive testimonial support in open court. People hold strong negative attitudes towards accused sex offenders, even juvenile accused sex offenders (Sahlstrom & Jeglic, 2008; Vidmar, 1997). Vidmar (1997) examined 25 Canadian trials of sexual abuse and found an average of 36% of jurors reported they could not be impartial due to a presumption of guilt. Sahlstrom and Jeglic (2008) also noted that participants generally held negative perceptions of juvenile sex offenders.

The findings from this study did not support the two-factor theory of perceived credibility, which shows that perceived credibility is comprised of two components: perceived honesty and perceived cognitive competence (Ross et al., 2003). In this study, perceived honesty and cognitive competence were strongly correlated, meaning they were not treated as distinct components. It is possible that due to the high number of questions and dependent variables used in this study, participants had a difficult time distinguishing between perceived honesty and cognitive competence. In other words, if the participants found one of the youth credible, they tended to rate that youth highly on all the dependent variables (including honesty and cognitive competence). It is also possible that since the alleged offence was a sexual assault, a case that typically warrants honesty being rated more heavily, participants were more focused on the youths' perceived honesty and used this rating to judge perceived cognitive competence. Future research should continue to explore the validity of the two-factor theory of perceived credibility.

### **Implications and Policy Recommendations**

This study appears to be among the first to examine the impact of any type of testimonial support on the perceptions of an accused youth. This research could help to expand the current

literature on accused youths, currently an under-researched portion of the criminal justice system, and testimonial supports, which currently favour complainants. This study also appears to be the first to improve the response clarity of any individual by using RI interjections. This research could allow for a deeper understanding of the impact that RI interjections have on questioning. The current research could also have practical implications for both policymakers and legal professionals. Arguably, the most important aspect of any court proceeding is the communication that occurs amongst the complainant, the accused, and members of the court. Therefore, this study could help shed light on the struggles accused youths face during their communication while in the criminal justice system and helps to advocate for accused persons to be treated equally during the courts proceedings. The findings of this research could also provide valuable information on the best practices for cross-examining accused youths. One of the most important findings that came from this research was that generally across both experiments, the accused was perceived as less credible when they testified with an RI. This finding clearly shows accused youths could face negative repercussions if they require communication assistance, although they are entitled to the presumption of innocence and a fair trial. Meaning, this portion of the criminal justice system could be negatively impacted due to their legal status. The findings from this study should highlight that all persons, regardless of their legal status, should be entitled to testimonial and communication supports and the use of these supports alone should not lead to presumptions of guilt.

### **Limitations**

This research is not without its limitations. A clear limitation of the two experiments is a lack of ecological validity by using written cross-examination transcripts. In a real-life court case, jurors would be able to see and hear the complainant, the accused, and the RI throughout the court proceedings. Also, these experiments only examined how two factors impact perceived credibility, RI interjections and the youth's legal status. In real-life court cases, many other factors (e.g., gender, ethnicity, etc.) of an individual are all considered when jurors are evaluating perceived credibility. The use of online data collection for this project was a limitation as it resulted in a low response rate. Many participants failed to complete the experiment in its entirety, and instead they just answered a few questions or failed to answer any questions at all. Finally, as previously mentioned, while a literature base on accused persons and intermediaries is emerging, it is still limited. This created a limitation as there was little relevant research to draw upon for this study.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the findings of this research showed that the accused was perceived as less credible when they testified with an RI. Therefore, the use of testimonial supports that help facilitate one's communication with members of the court could negatively impact those accused of crimes. All persons have the right to a fair trial and to be presumed innocent. If an accused person requires communication assistance to provide their best testimony, it is vital that the use of these supports alone does not negatively impact perceptions of them.

## Tables

**Table 1.** *Experiment 1 Perceived Credibility Ratings Means (Standard Deviation)*

		<b>Complainant and Accused with an RI</b>	<b>Complainant and Accused without an RI</b>	<b>Complainant with an RI and Accused without</b>	<b>Complainant without an RI and Accused with</b>
<b>Complainant</b>	<b>Overall Credibility</b>	4.77 (1.03)	4.74 (1.30)	4.59 (1.23)	5.28 (0.97)
	<b>Anxiety</b>	4.90 (1.47)	4.92 (1.38)	4.83 (1.43)	4.70 (1.65)
<b>Accused</b>	<b>Overall Credibility</b>	3.98 (0.98)	3.79 (1.37)	4.36 (1.01)	3.82 (1.30)
	<b>Anxiety</b>	4.19 (1.43)	4.31 (1.62)	3.84 (1.57)	4.21 (1.73)
	<b>Guilt</b>	4.78 (1.27)	4.80 (1.29)	4.40 (1.44)	5.00 (1.32)

*Note:* Maximum score = 7. RI = registered intermediary.

**Table 2.** *Experiment 2 Perceived Credibility Ratings Means (Standard Deviation)*

		<b>Complainant and Accused with an RI</b>	<b>Complainant and Accused without an RI</b>	<b>Complainant with an RI and Accused without</b>	<b>Complainant without an RI and Accused with</b>
<b>Complainant</b>	<b>Overall Credibility</b>	5.27 (1.08)	4.78 (1.08)	5.06 (1.11)	5.06 (1.01)
	<b>Anxiety</b>	3.75 (1.52)	4.91 (1.44)	4.21 (1.64)	4.29 (1.79)
<b>Accused</b>	<b>Overall Credibility</b>	4.44 (1.12)	4.03 (1.12)	4.22 (1.34)	3.52 (1.25)
	<b>Anxiety</b>	3.35 (1.39)	3.96 (1.58)	3.85 (1.88)	4.21 (1.83)
	<b>Guilt</b>	4.50 (1.35)	4.71 (1.33)	4.68 (1.45)	4.81 (1.39)

*Note:* Maximum score = 7. RI = registered intermediary.

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